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Do This in Remembrance of Me: The Eucharist from the Early Church to the Present Day, written by Bryan D. Spinks

(London: SCM, 2013), xv + 514 pp. ISBN 978-0-334-04376-8 (pbk). £60.

Distilling a life's liturgical scholarship, this volume comprehensively surveys the eucharistic prayers (technically termed *anaphorae*) of every documented Christian tradition and grouping, beginning with Saint Paul and continuing up to the ranted Beat Mass of Rough Edge, a Christian collective dispersed around Durham in the north-east of England. It will be an invaluable resource for liturgical scholars and practitioners as well as for theologians wishing to engage with the liturgy, directing the student to many of the best classic and recent sources and filling the inevitable gaps in the general knowledge of the specialised researcher. Indeed, every reader will discover facts and arguments that they did not realise they did not know. During the third and fourth centuries the vast majority of Christians worshipped in cemeteries, with only a tiny elite regularly attending Sunday worship in churches (p. 93). Part of the motive for defining 'moments' of consecration in the Roman rite was to guard against the idolatry of premature adoration of the host or chalice (p. 228). The kissing of the Gospel book was part of Zwingli's rite in Zurich (p. 277). In her private chapel, Queen Elizabeth I retained an altar furnished in the Roman Catholic style (p. 325). In the 1689 Liturgy of Comprehension the Beatitudes took the place of the Ten Commandments (p. 337). The Peculiar People of Essex and Kent were not an Anglican splinter group claiming direct lineage from the Augustinian mission, but a Methodist offshoot with a brief directory-style liturgical order complemented by theologically rich hymnody (pp. 372–5). Within the East Syrian Church the bread is prepared using elaborate baking rituals (p. 144). A critical appraisal of this outstanding study is difficult because the author's own views on any given topic are normally unclear, with liturgies as diverse as the Ethio-Eritrean, the Swedenborgian New Church service and the Church of Scotland's *Common Order* expounded in succession with little or no assessment of their merits. In this review I shall therefore address two issues: the ecumenical implications of some of Spinks's expositions, and the possible limitations of a study of the liturgy that focuses on eucharistic prayers.

Spinks's material has suggestive ecumenical implications. (The reader needs to work to identify these, because the index comprises names but not concepts.) For instance, the anaphora of Addai and Mari lacks an institution narrative, as does Theodore of Mopsuestia's mystagogy. What each instead contains is a strong epiclesis of the Spirit on the elements, which are viewed until then as representing Christ's dead body and blood. These notions and their accompanying practices contributed to the Byzantine liturgies, in which an epiclesis of the Spirit rather than words of institution effects the change in the elements. The Spirit is also prominent in some contemporary Pentecostal liturgies, such as those of the Church of God. Spinks quotes Daniel Tomberlin's description of the sacraments as 'material substances which the Spirit *touches*' (p. 427) and Chris Green's avowal that 'in the Eucharist-event, the Spirit "broods over" the cosmically-enthroned Christ, the celebrating congregation, and the elements on the Table' (p. 429). This suggests that an Orthodox–Pentecostal dialogue on liturgical theology and pneumatology could be fruitful, especially in view of the incomprehension and often outright hostility that exist between evangelical missionaries and Orthodox clergy in many Orthodox countries. Furthermore, Green is reluctant to conceive of eucharistic conversion as discontinuous or momentary, stating that the bread is not transmuted into a new kind of thing but becomes what it fully is in the new world of the liturgical eschaton. This position is also traceable from Theodore into Byzantium, where the bread and wine are set apart in the prothesis ceremony, which precedes the public liturgy, and are treated with tremendous reverence at the Great Entrance. At the altar mere bread and wine do not become Christ's body and blood; rather, Christ's body and blood are resurrected by the power of the Spirit and thereby receive life.

Spinks hints that his own view is that there is greater continuity between 'ordinary' eating, drinking, bread and wine on the one hand, and the Eucharist and Christ's body and blood on the other, than has been recognised in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the expositions of both Luther and Calvin. He develops this reflection when discussing bread-making and wine-making as processes of 'transmutation through destruction, or immolation' that nevertheless involve 'skill and art, a new

creation' (p. 437), as well as in a moving anamnesis of the last Christmas dinner shared with his wife Linda, who had been discharged from hospital with terminal leukaemia.

It would be impossible to cover all aspects of the Eucharist in a single volume, and the decision to focus on eucharistic prayers is fully justified. Nevertheless, such reference has the effect of giving interpretive privilege to a portion of the liturgy in which the presider has more agency than the laity. This is especially true in the Orthodox liturgy, in which, usually, the eucharistic prayer is said and its associated rituals are performed behind the iconostasis screen, shut doors and closed curtains. In many of the Western Churches attempts have been made to give the laity greater involvement by interpolating acclamations, which can work well. Even so, Spinks's perspective would usefully be complemented by an understanding of the whole liturgy as commemorating Christ and making him present, as was offered by its medieval allegorical exegeses. To take but a few examples, the standing congregation were the Israelites expectantly awaiting Christ's arrival. Incense was Christ's uncorrupted body in good odour. The Gloria was the choir of angelic and human voices. The cantor's voice was the prophets. The Gospel procession was God's Word going out into the world among the Gentiles, and so on.

Also in medieval exegesis, different moments in the liturgy made Christ successively present in his Incarnation, preaching, Passion, death, burial, Resurrection and Ascension. For example, the priest's final blessing and departure from the raised altar platform represented Christ's Ascension from the Mount of Olives, where he left his disciples. Owing to this dispersed representational mode, the anaphora was not required to deliver unaided the theological interpretation of the whole liturgy that was later expected of it. Even at the altar the focus was subtly different. Whereas later medieval devotion and polemics would centre on the elevation of the host, and subsequently also of the chalice, as moments of consecration, the earlier allegorical interpretation required that the host be elevated primarily in order that it might then be *lowered* onto the paten and covered by the pall. This act represented the deposition of Christ's body from the cross, its wrapping for burial and placement into the tomb.

Spinks quotes part of a eucharistic prayer from an alternative worship resource by Simon Rundell, which proclaims that '*none*' of the wordy theologians, praying saints or witnessing apostles 'have ever got their heads around what happens here' (p. 430). I beg to differ. Although full comprehension should not be expected this side of the eschaton, Spinks has made a pretty good attempt. Successful mission needs liturgical renewal of a kind that draws on our immensely rich worship traditions and speaks through these about Christian truth and doctrine, and there is much here to ponder.